

THE QUIVER

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(Drawn by R. BARNES.)

"It wouldn't be to my interest, ma'am, to give up the free trade."—p. 179.

"ONE TRIP MORE"

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY FOWELL."

MRS. AYMER'S husband has come home," said Sophia; "he returned last night."

"What is he like?" said Agnes, looking up from her drawing, with some interest.

"Such a good-looking, honest-looking young sailor! just a match for his pretty young wife—and so domestic! He is now sitting by the kitchen-fire, basting our goose."

"Home just in time to keep Michaelmas Day," said Mrs. Monkton. "I must have a talk with him by-and-by, I think."

Mrs. Monkton and her daughters were lodging for a few weeks in a cottage so small that they had had no idea, at first, of remaining there for more than a day or two to look out for better quarters. But better quarters were not to be had, and in the meanwhile, the exceeding kindness and simplicity of their landlady so won on them, and the neighbourhood of the little fishing village seemed so worth exploring, that they were continuing where they were without any fixed plan when to go. Mrs. Aymer "did for them," as the saying is; and she was as neat-handed a Phillis as even an invalid could desire. There was hardly an idle moment in her life, yet she made no bustle; and whatever she might be about, there was a look of smiling content on her fair, child-like face, as if she were thinking of something pleasant.

The women and girls of the place were better dressed than persons of their class can usually afford to be; and on Sundays it was astonishing what gay turn-outs there would be from very poor cottages. To a superficial observer, this gave an appearance of thriving prosperity.

During the first few days, it did not transpire whether Mrs. Aymer were widow or wife. A respectable-looking mother occasionally dropped in on her, but there was no man about the house. On the Sunday, however, she casually observed that she stayed at home to take care of the house when her husband was away. When he was at home, they took it in turns to attend morning service, and went together in the evening.

"Mrs. Aymer, what is your husband?"

"A smuggler, ma'am."

Mrs. Monkton stopped short. Her daughters looked petrified. Mrs. Monkton said, "Oh, but I'm sorry to hear that," quietly, but very gravely.

"Are you, ma'am?" said Mrs. Aymer, with her pretty, innocent look; "why, I think I do things worse than that every day."

Her daily life was apparently so blameless, that the mother and daughters wondered what she could be thinking of. She evidently meant to imply that, in her view, smuggling was no fault at all.

"I see it in a very different light from what you do," said Mrs. Monkton. "I am the daughter of a Government officer, and, of course, have always been accustomed to hear smuggling spoken of very strongly. It is defrauding the revenue; and you know the revenue is as much *property* as the possessions of a private individual. It is as dishonest to defraud the Queen as a private person."

Mrs. Aymer looked as if this were too difficult

a question for her to answer. She said it had never been considered so among her people. Every man in the place was a smuggler, except her husband's brother. Their wives encouraged them in it, because it brought them so much money.

So here was the secret of the gay dressing!

Mrs. Monkton argued the point a little more with her, using the simplest words and illustrations she could think of; but it was almost like talking to a baby: comprehension was wanting. The grand idea seemed to be that "Charley" could do no wrong.

And here was Charley back, slipping into his own house like a culprit on Michaelmas Eve, and sitting by his fire, basting the goose, on Michaelmas Day, like an honest man that had no load on his conscience.

The Monktons were endued with that knack of entering into the interests of others, and conciliating their regard, which seems born in some people. Before the day was out they were on sociable terms with Charley; and towards gloaming, when his wife had stepped out to her mother, and he was sitting in the window, looking out on his little garden, Mrs. Monkton, seeing him through the open door, stepped in and commenced a colloquy.

"This is a nice little place of yours, Mr. Aymer."

"Well, ma'am, it is" (rather sheepishly). "I'm afraid you can't be very comfortable, ma'am."

"We are very comfortable indeed, thank you. Your good little wife lets us want for nothing. We are quite pleased with her."

He looked almost as much embarrassed at her being praised, as if he had been praised himself.

"I'm sure she'd do her best," said he. Then, after a pause, "I'm glad, for my part, she should have ladies along with her when I'm away, for it keeps her thoughts off me, and prevents her being lonesome like."

"She must be often lonesome by herself," said Mrs. Monkton. "Every sailor's wife must have anxious thoughts when he's at sea; more especially when he is concerned, as I am sorry to find you are, in what you call the free trade."

"Ah," said he, smiling, and beginning to pull a flower to pieces, "Mary told me you'd been speaking to her about that."

"I did, indeed, but I did not say much, for it is your affair, not hers; but I do wish I could get you to see it in the right light."

"Well, ma'am, we all think our own the right light, I believe; or, at any rate, we don't like to see a thing in any other light when it's against our interest."

"Interest is one thing, duty is another; but yet I believe, Mr. Aymer (and I have lived a good

deal longer than you have), in the end, we find that in following duty we have followed interest too."

"It wouldn't be to my interest, ma'am, to give up the free trade. I've a third share in a boat; my partners are both of 'em great hands at bringing over brandy. Our trade would be quite done up if we didn't."

"Has this been a good trip?"

"Why, no"—(very reluctantly)—"we saw the Custom-house cutter rounding the point, so we'd nothing for it but to sink our tubs and leave a buoy."

"It does not always answer your interest, then."

"Oh, we shall fish 'em up again, you know, when the preventives are not on the look out."

"The preventives and you are not very good friends, I suppose."

"They can't expect us to be *their* friends."

"And yet they are only acting in the way of duty."

"An exciseman might say that."

"He might, and with truth. You look a true Englishman, Aymer—it is written all over you. It is a fine thing to belong to this free, happy land."

"Tis so, sure-ly."

"And her sailors are her glory,—always have been. It seems a pity that any of them should injure their mother-country, that they love and are proud of, and would fight for and die for, if need were, by setting her laws at naught, even in the smallest instance, and defrauding her of her substance—be it ever so little."

"Well, ma'am, all things go by comparison—they will have it that our boat hinders Government of about three thousand a year."

"Three thousand! you shock me! And do you three partners each get a thousand?"

"No, indeed, ma'am!" and he laughed heartily; very little of it indeed."

"Not much more perhaps than you could get in lawful trade—and with all the risk and opprobrium besides. Oh, do be persuaded by me, Mr. Aymer, to give up free-trading! Think of your good little wife."

"She is a good little thing, that's a fact."

"And your calling is a very precarious one, and, you know, is unlawful."

"Well, I do know that—better than she does, poor little myrtle."

"Ill-gotten gains never prosper. A little that the righteous hath is better than great riches of the ungodly. I'm sure she would love you quite as well, if you had only your honest earnings to bring home."

"Yes, she would; but— Well, I'll tell ye this, ma'am: you've not been talking altogether in vain. You might have talked all your breath away to Grimes and Briggs, and they wouldn't have

minded you a bit; but I'm not of their sort. I'm minded to leave the free trade after the next trip."

"Oh, don't go once more; give it up now."

"No, ma'am—no, I can't. It couldn't be managed without hurting my partners; but I'll only take one trip more." And with this Mrs. Monkton was obliged to be content: indeed, she thought it was a great concession to have obtained, and her daughters were quite surprised at it.

It was a bright, sparkling autumnal morning when the wicked little *Spitfire* sailed on her "one trip more." Many a glass was pointed towards her, as she danced out of harbour, throwing showers of sparkling spray from her sides as she cut through the waves, now and then almost heeling over in the fresh sea-breeze. Everybody, friend and foe, knew what she was going for: the friends wished her good speed, and trusted in her good luck. The foes had never been able to catch her *in flagranti delicto* yet; but they felt sure of doing so, soon or late, and of seeing her sawn in two. Mrs. Aymer, with her fair curls blowing in the wind, and screening her blue eyes from the sun with her hand, watched her husband's vessel out of sight, and then turned into her cottage—doubtless, feeling

"The village seems asleep or dead,

Now Lubin is away."

And so things resumed their regular course.

One evening when she came in to remove the tea-tray, Mrs. Monkton observed she had very red eyes, and asked if anything were the matter.

Then the tears burst forth. "Oh, ma'am! don't you know? The *Spitfire* is seized, with her cargo on board, and the men put in the county gaol!"

Here was a thunderstroke! it was no use, now, to say, "If Aymer would but have been persuaded by me, not to have one trip more." Mrs. Aymer regretted as bitterly as it could be that he had not been persuaded, now that it was too late. All her friends could do now was to pity, condole, and try to console; but there was little consolation within reach.

"They'll be tried at the assizes, and we must club our money together and sell a few things to pay for a lawyer. Mother and I are going over to see Charley to-morrow—it's a long way to walk, and will take us all day, to be home before dark, even if we start very early. You won't mind Mrs. James doing for you, ma'am?"

"Oh, no—tell your husband I'm very sorry for him, and wish I could help him; but you see, Mrs. Aymer, the laws must be observed, and those who break them must be punished, or where should we all be? You would be in much harder case, and so would everybody, if there were no law in the land."

"Yes, ma'am, I dare say,"—and tears rolled down.

She returned late the next night, worn out and comfortless; almost too dejected to take the cup of nice tea they made for her. Charley was very cast down, he wished he'd taken the lady's advice; he was sure he and his partners would not be let off, because there was such a spite against them.

Because there was such a just fear of their returning to their old courses, would have been the better word; but the unreasoning always attribute distrust and disapproval to spite.

The fatiguing walk was repeated when the trial came on. The men lost it, and nobody was surprised. The vessel was condemned, and the owners sentenced to imprisonment till they could pay a fine of £600.

"Which we never can," said Mrs. Aymer, through her tears. "Grimes and Briggs may pay their share, maybe, but they won't help Charley, they're so selfish. He's been their tool all along."

On investigating the matter very closely, this so plainly appeared to be the case, that the Monktons' pity for the misguided young man greatly increased. For his young wife, now near her confinement, they had deep compassion. There seemed every probability that the men would pass the winter in gaol; "And serve 'em right," said many.

Mrs. Monkton's sympathy was never barren, when she could help people. The weather was bitterly cold when Mrs. Aymer undertook her next visit to her husband—perhaps the last she would pay him before she was confined.

"Tell him," said Mrs. Monkton, "that he knows what strong objections there are to the course which has brought him into this sad trouble; and that I hope to hear from him, through you, that he now firmly resolves never to have anything to do, directly or indirectly, with smuggling again, whatever may be his temptations."

When Mrs. Aymer returned from her sorrowful journey, she brought Mrs. Monkton a little note from Charley, which she said he had written on

his knees, and in tears. It began with the emphatic word "Friend," and was to this effect:—"I regret I did not take your advice; and I now promise, on my knees before God, that whatever may be my temptations, I will never have anything to do, directly or indirectly, with smuggling again. So help me, God. Amen."

And God did help him, through the instrumentality of his kind friend. "Vows made in pain are violent and void"—at least, so some say; but Mrs. Monkton had seen enough of life to know something of the expression of genuine contrition. She thought the young man's word was to be trusted, and she acted on that conviction, and addressed a memorial to the Queen. That memorial spoke of Aymer's offence, his temptations, his inability to pay the fine, the good character borne by him and his wife (save in this one bad course), his sacred promise to abandon it, and the reasonable security there was that he would keep his word.

After strict inquiry being made on the spot, through the preventive officer of the station, the Queen, then very young, remitted her half of the fine; which was, indeed, all she could do, as the other half went to the excise. Was it not a merciful and womanly deed?

At dead of night, when the Monktons were in bed and asleep, the wakeful Mrs. Aymer heard a pebble thrown against her window. On opening it, her heart leaped to find Charley standing below. He had walked all those miles, directly he was liberated, to his home and his wife. How joyful their meeting was, they only knew. His first care on his return was to raise money on his little property to pay off the remaining half of the fine.

What became of his partners, I do not remember. Charley kept his word: he never had anything to do, directly or indirectly, with smuggling again. He spent the winter quietly and thankfully at home, and before long might be seen with a nice little girl in his arms. In the spring he was engaged, for good wages, as cook on board a gentleman's yacht.

THE MANNER OF CHRIST'S LOVE.

BY THE REV. G. A. CHADWICK, M.A.

"As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you."—John xv. 9.



THESE words are enough to strike awe and wonder into the heart of the most faithful Christian. It is much to know that Christ loves us at all. Wonderful, when we think of it, that his benefits have not been bestowed from a lofty sense of duty, or from desire to do the Father's will, unmingled with a warmer and more

human feeling. He did not merely compassionate our wretchedness, and so stoop and save us, as men of finely strung sensibilities might stoop to rescue a reptile from the ploughshare or the wheel: in his heart there was real love, warm, ardent, individualising, self-crucifying love—love in its kind as genuine, but how much greater in degree, than that which burns in the heart of husband

and of mother, suffering for wife and child. Such is the love of a Christian to his Lord; and we know that if we love him, it is because he first loved us. And hence, if we were left alone, we might infer that Christ, who so loved the world as to die for it, must feel a very peculiar tenderness for those whom the Father hath given him out of the world. In them he beholds the fruit of his labour, the travail of his soul, the reward—which he deems sufficient—of all his sorrows, humiliation, and blood. Very dear they must be to him, and very comforting their love, amid the ingratitude of the mass of mankind. But there are many kinds of love, all genuine, yet various. The lower creatures have often a very beautiful and striking love for their young offspring, which nevertheless entirely disappears when the strength of their brood has ripened into maturity. The affection of various men is so widely different as to seem unlike the same emotion; and no person will pretend that his love for sister or parent, at six years old, was that enlightened, and calm, and deep affection that he would fain hope it is now. And the love of a Christian for his God is, or ought to be, something quite above and beyond the purest and strongest pulsation of his heart for any fellow-creature whatsoever. While even this is, doubtless, overtopped in stature and out-reached in extent by the love of those blessed and sinless creatures who kept their first estate, and eternally behold him as he is.

Now, considering our degradation when Christ espoused our cause, our long resistance to his gracious invitations, and our many rebellions since we bent our necks beneath his yoke, would it not have been much if he had gone to the love felt by the highest of these to him for a picture of his love to his own people here? If he had told us that no creature ever loved God more than he loved the Church? And would we not have been astonished if he added yet this also, that God's own infinite heart cherished for no creature a love which might not fairly be used to illustrate his love to us? But our Lord Jesus went further yet. He fixed not upon God's love for those ministers of his who do his pleasure—for them who fall down before him with veiled faces—for Gabriel who in the presence of God stands erect; nor yet for that whole vast creation of which they are the crowning point, and which through all its parts abounds in wisdom, smiles in loveliness, or blazes in splendour; but he chose a grander image still. The love of the Father for himself, for the one Son, his well-beloved, who was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, is set forth as a not presumptuous parallel for the love of Christ for his own people. Not, of course, that the degrees are, equal or the intensity alike; but the manner and the nature are the same.

1. The Son owes his Divine existence to the Father. It is true that he was not created, but he was begotten. It is true that each Person in the glorious Trinity came down through all the past eternity, but that is because the Son was "begotten of the Father before all worlds (or ages); God begotten of God, light begotten of light, very God begotten of very God." He said, "I live by the Father." "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." And when God looks upon Christ he sees there the express image of his own person, and loves it when he sees.

But can we not see that a kindred pleasure (like, though not the same) is felt by the Son when he looks upon his people whom he has redeemed? Has he not said, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, even so he that eateth me, the same shall live by me?" Every act of faith and love—every victory which a loving child gains over its worst passions for Jesus' sake—every taunt endured by a Christian schoolboy, because Christ reviled not again—every temptation to dishonest gains resisted by a careworn man, to secure Living Bread amid the dearth of the meat that perisheth, flows from him as its author, and tends to him as its goal. Ay, more. Whatsoever things are really true and honest, just and pure, lovely and of good report, where there is any genuine virtue and any worthy praise, in them we trace the features of Him who is the father of true honour and deeprooted chivalry, as well as the Head of the Church, the author and finisher of the faith. And in his heart also the mysterious joy of authorship glows and deepens, as more and more he sees of the travail of his soul, and is satisfied.

2. The power and energy of the Son are derived from his Father; as he said, "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do. The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth." Here the latter clause, and, indeed, the whole context, proves that he speaks of more than his human nature; and the infinite love of the Father for his Son is proved by giving his own Spirit and his power not by measure unto him. The power that woke Nature from the sleep of chaos—the power that sustains the universe in order, and prosperity, and loveliness—the power that shall yet shake that universe to its base, and call the forgotten dead from long-levelled graves, where their very bones have crumbled back into dust, all this committed freely to the Son, is a noble standard by which to estimate the love that shines eternally upon him.

We cannot tell how much of Christ's judicial splendour it is "his to give" his people; but we know that the apostles shall sit with him upon

twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and the saints shall judge the world, and to him that overcometh he will give to sit with him on his throne. He says, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed me." This truly is to love us as the Father hath loved him.

Not only in the future, but now also, Christ proves his affection by giving us power and energy. How does the Christian overcome what his neighbour cannot? How does the converted man resist those allurements which once led him captive at their will? By the enjoyment of a sacred vigour not their own, by a revelation from Christ of his lovely character, and of the beauty of holiness, giving to his followers something of what the Father has given him, making them to be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world.

3. And as God beholds in Christ his own offspring, and his own power, so does he recognise his own image and likeness too, "the outshining of his glory, and the stamp of his personality."*

Doubtless the joy of creating the universe was that of showing out and expressing God's own power. And not power alone, but love, and order, and beauty were written upon the face of all the worlds, and enjoyed most of all by him who could best appreciate the merits of his own work. In his eyes they were "very good." But never was there such an utterance of what lay deep within the Godhead as in Christ, who is therefore called the Word of God. The Father's nature conveyed itself into him complete and undiminished, and, even shrouded in his veil of flesh, none could see the Son without seeing the Father also. Surely this union of character was a strong bond of love.

But in like manner the character of Christ is seen in his obedient people. Just as truly as the taint of Adam is felt in the world's blood, so surely does the righteousness of Christ reveal itself in his own elect. Christ is formed in them; in his death they die to sin, and in his new life they live again to God.

A true Christian may sin, but sin is not the expression of his true self—not what he may best be understood by—not that in him by which a stranger would get a fair idea of the man. His seed remaineth in him, and (taking the whole man together, reason, and conscience, and affection, heart and head, as well as impulsive hand) he cannot sin.

Where, then, shall we turn for the true character of a man of God? Have you ever thought how little a man's deeds tell about his real self, how often some commonplace, unnoticed person

* This is the force of that memorable verse, Heb. i. 3.

risers to sudden heroism, and another, respectable and blameless hitherto, sinks to the level of a scoundrel and a rogue? None could tell, by their previous lives, which was the villain or which the nobleman. But if you could have looked into their minds, and seen what people they admired or envied, then you could have predicted which would burn like dross in the fire of temptation, and which would shine out true gold. A man most truly is, not what he does, but what he copies and desires to be. Therefore a Christian is best understood and most faithfully represented by Christ, his great exemplar, his model, and his chosen leader. God acts upon this principle, and accepts for ours that perfect righteousness towards which we so imperfectly aspire. And when Christ looks upon the weakest of his people, he sees there at least an infant resemblance to himself—"Christ born"—and expects the time when the likeness shall be perfect—"Christ all in all." And thus he can love us, as the Father loves him, with the love of resemblance.

Such is the privilege, the honour, and the dignity which the worldly man casts behind his back. Is it, then, so much better to be praised and flattered by a crowd than to be loved by the King of kings? Are the pleasures of sin for a season so far superior to the solid, the deep, the un-failing conviction that He has set his love upon us, in whose favour is eternal life? Is the prospect so far more desirable, of waking up to see treasures wasted, hope dead, heaven closed, and the infinite eternity stretching out above our unsheltered heads, without a star to cheer it, than the prospect of going where our treasures are laid up, and our hopes hid with Christ, and of looking down the shining vistas of a boundless future, without finding one moment of separation from the truest and most faithful Friend that ever cheered the journey of life or the bed of death with the golden light of love?

Is it not strange that Christ should have to warn the subjects of such love lest they should wander outside its range? Sooner, we might think, would a dweller in regions of Southern loveliness and warmth turn for pleasure to the frozen zone; sooner would some winged creature, that had freely bathed in the blue of morning, fix his desires upon a cage and a master, than a Christian, who had received Christ's love, be tempted away from its warmth and its largeness to the poor, and selfish, and lonely pleasures of a Christ-forgetting world. But experience does not tell us so. How often have we allowed ourselves to wander far away from the joy and confidence, from the safety and the fellowship, which continuance in his love bestows! What little idea was that which caught our fancy, or tempted our

desire, or enraged our self-esteem, or smoothed down our vanity?—and, behold! we have forsaken in heart the fountain of living waters, to drink the stagnant drops which remained in broken cisterns. How very few there are that can claim the calm and settled faith, the bright hope of heaven, and the tranquil contentment in time, which are given to us all while we faithfully continue in the love of Christ.

Therefore we need to be warned and exhorted, lest our own hearts, and the pressure of care, and the flutter of hope destroy us. Therefore each day should have a time, at its commencement, when holy thoughts and fervent prayers may give a tone to the succeeding hours; when earthly

wishes may be calmed down to moderation, and the presence of the Master be consciously enjoyed. Therefore there should be a season also at its close, when we may question our own hearts, and force them to confess if they have been faithless and cold, and call our Lord back to the abode which has admitted other occupants. And lest we be lured away by the world, we should think (until we feel) how short a time it has to last, so that if we did not leave it, there is no doubt that it would presently fail us. And also let us fortify ourselves by the hope of those enduring and pure delights with which Christ's love will crown his followers when all other delights have faded.

THE SKY.

"Look unto the heavens, and see; and behold the clouds which are higher than thou."—Job. xxxv. 5.



OW many hundreds will elbow, and fight, and pant, and push to see a royal personage or an unusually atrocious criminal, but of these same gasping, eager hundreds, how few will take the trouble to lift their eyes above the carriage of royalty, or the gallows of the criminal, and gaze for a moment on the ineffable beauty and wonder of the sky! "Say, why is this, wherefore, whence can it be?" Does it not seem marvellous that God should be almost daily preparing for our careless eyes sights which man's utmost dexterity can but feebly imitate, and that nine-tenths of us should be so utterly forgetful of, and thankless for, their glorious spectacles, compared with which royal pageants are but a gaudy mockery? Is it due to carelessness of observation, lack of sympathy with the natural world, or selfish hard-heartedness? We think that it has a mixed origin. Some of us are at best but careless, superficial observers; others, again, hold but in slight estimation the beauties of inanimate Nature; and, thirdly, too many are so utterly consumed with the business of getting together gold, that we actually grudge the time to watch the rolling of a cloud. It is an unhealthy mind that cannot, or will not, cease from grovelling on the earth, to rise for a few moments into the purer, loftier beauties and interests of the sky. A mind thus set in this changeless, iron mould, must be of the earth, earthy.

Depend upon it, if we were to become more of sky-gazers, we should not on that account become worse men of business, worse lawyers, worse physicians, worse ministers; the very sympathy shown with this most glorious and most intelligible of God's revelations would of itself tend

very much to raise and purify our minds, both morally and intellectually. Let but the merchant look upon the fair, open countenance of the sky, and fraud must be exorcised from his mind like some foul spirit; let but the minister glance up to the wide canopy of heaven, and he will forget the clashing of the creeds, and only remember that, "as the blue sky bends over all," so there is one God, the Lord and Father of us all.

We should acquire the physical habit more of looking up, and not, as so many of us do, walk with downcast eyes, as if the pavements had some magic spell to bind us with, or as though the areas were caves of beauty. The pavements are mostly interesting from the amount of mud they can develop, and the areas are dark, cheerless recesses, railed off from the whirl and hurry of the street. By looking up, we gain light, colour, beauty; by looking down, we find darkness, muddiness, ugliness. Do we lose by merely exercising a different set of the muscles of the eye? Most distinctly, no: we gain. We ought, as human beings, to hold sympathy with the sky, for it has so many features of identity with our own human hearts. The clear and tranquil blue of midsummer is but the image of a heart at peace with itself and the world beside; the dark and lowering gloom of the thunder-cloud is but the shadow of the dark heart at war with itself, and threatening to the world around. The joyous roll of the fleecy cumulus echoes back its music into our joyous hearts, and when the morn rises, "dim, and sad, and wet with early tears," our hearts are troubled and our eyes are dim. So that it would be but a part of our human dispositions to rejoice with the gladness of the white cloud, or to sorrow with the tearful mists of morning. Artists and poets have hitherto monopolised this sky sympathy;

why should it not be extended to all mankind who have eyes to see?

One poet makes use of the wild element of the sky when, in that marvellous description of a storm, in his "In Memoriam," he puts the finishing touch by saying—

"And wildly dashed on tower and tree,
The sunbeam strikes along the world."

The wildly-dashed sunbeam striking along the tempest-stricken world is the keynote to the whole picture.

In Shelley's poem, called "The Recollection," we see how powerfully the character of the sky influenced his mind when he wrote these lines:—

"The whispering waves were half asleep,
The clouds were gone to play,
And on the bosom of the deep
The smile of heaven lay;
It seemed as if the hour were one
Sent from beyond the skies,
Which scattered from above the sun
A light of paradise."

The perfect purity and tranquillity of the sky instilled into the restless heart of Shelley a sacred calm, which is all the more remarkable for the rarity of its occurrence, as this poet sang best and strongest when his heart was filled with wild unrest.

Wordsworth shows in many parts of his works the importance of the sky, and its great influence on the human mind. The feeling of association that is awakened by the sky is well instanced in his poem of "The Two April Mornings," where Matthew replies—

"Yon cloud, with that long purple cleft,
Brings fresh into my mind
A day like this, which I have left
Full thirty years behind.
And just above yon slope of corn,
Such colours and no other,
Were in the sky that April morn,
Of this the very brother."

That the mind should have gone back thirty years into the past, merely from seeing an April cloud with its purple cleft, seems at first sight strange, nay, passing strange, to those who care not for the sky, and are heedless of its beauties; but to any one who is a sky-gazer in even a small degree, this link between a cloud and an incident will at once appear most natural, and the very suggestion of such a link in the chain of our ideas shows Wordsworth to have been a great observer as well as a great poet. And indeed, I think that, after all, most of us can remember some pre-eminently bright day, full of sunshine and gladness, which has been associated with happy memories, "one of those heavenly days that never die," and one which owed its charm to the glorious sky that hung smiling over the happy landscape.

As another instance of sky influence on the mind, another quotation from Wordsworth would, I think, be scarcely foreign to the subject; it is from "The Affliction of Margaret," and runs thus:—

"My apprehensions come in crowds;
I dread the rustling of the grass;
The very shadows of the clouds
Have power to shake me as they pass."

Who does not feel the power of melancholy when the last rays of the sun grow dim, and only a faint, tremulous glow is left brooding over the drowsy earth? What is it that lends poetry to those distant elms, but the pale yellow gleam that plays between the branches, making their stems more sombre, and their boughs more weird in outline? Yon pool with its reedy bank is now a mirror of gold, thanks to the golden sky. As the moor-fowl skims with hasty wing along its surface, she leaves a track of fire. To-morrow the mirror of gold will be a dull, grey pond, where ducks do mostly congregate: so great is the power of transformation possessed by evening skies.

The sky, again, gives one a greater idea of vastness, nay, of infinity itself, than any other of God's creations: for who hath "meted out heaven with the span?" Look for a moment up to the blue region overhead, and try to fix a sky-mark by which you may measure this unfathomable, palpitating sea of colour. The mind fails, and from our finite ideas we have a suggestion of the Infinite; and so are we led, by the greatness of God's works, to appreciate the greatness of Him who fashioned them so gloriously, "who made the outgoing of the morning and evening to praise him;" and when led to thank that God for having made the sky so exceeding beautiful, that, should we but raise our eyes above, the very wonder of its beauty could not fail to make our hearts overflow with gratitude and praise.

In Job we have a fine allusion to the sky. It begins as follows:—"Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and consider the wondrous works of God. Dost thou know when God disposed them, and caused the light of his cloud to shine? Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds, the wondrous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?" And again, "Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking-glass?"

To show how the absence of all sky, and consequently light, brings suggestions of death and annihilation, I would quote again from Job one verse in the third chapter, where, in the utter misery and desolation of his soul, he curses the day of his birth: "Let the stars of the twilight thereof be dark; let it look for light, but have none; neither let it see the dawning of the day." On the other hand, we could, from the very force of antithesis,



(Drawn by A. C. Gow.)

"That I might seem not to have lived in vain!"—p. 186.

have imagined that Job, in the days of his prosperity, when the dark cloud of trial had passed away, would rather have exclaimed with the preacher, "Truly, the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun!"

Could we but for a moment conceive such a creation as a world without a sky, or rather, we would say, without an illuminated sky—a sunless, moonless, starless existence—and have but a grey, pale mist enshrouding the earth, how completely would our ideas be changed. Then, indeed, should we of necessity cling to the earth, and cease to aspire to higher things; nay, the very word heaven, meaning originally the sky regions, would find no place in our language; light would be such a feeble emanation that we could scarcely have shadow, and day and night would cease to alternate; but one perpetual twilight would reign in cold, unyielding order. As colour owes so much of its beauty to light, we should have sombre greys and dull browns; instead of the bluebell, would spring up a pale, ghostly flower devoid of hue; the rose would forget its blushes, and the laburnum its

fires; the emerald and purple of the sunlit sea would be exchanged for a dull and uniform grey; heathery mountains would no longer glow with the sunset, nor daisied meadows shimmer joyous in the morning; the flash of the breaking wave, the gleam on the wild bird's wing, the dazzle on snowy peaks, and the lightning of love's eyes, would be unthought of as unknown. We should live a set-grey life, with no sunshine to cheer us, no colour to refine; our thoughts would be lifeless, and our aspirations would be limited.* We should grope through existence, as men who dream that they are half-blind, and even feel with blunted faculties. Life, with its glorious alternations of light and shade, would be a cheerless monotony, without light, or hope, or love, or gladness. Grey children of the mist, sprung from grey sires, without a blush in the cheek to suggest either modesty or health, without light or colour in the eye to speak of sorrow or of love, we should totter with uncertain steps from this earthly twilight to the uncertain twilight of the grave.

"NE FRUSTRA VIXISSE VIDEAR."

[Immediately before the death of the great astronomer, Tycho Brahe, he and Kepler were engaged in the composition of tables from the Oranienberg Observatory, built for him by Frederick II. He was suddenly seized with an acute disease, which, after a few days of intense suffering, terminated in mortification. During his delirium, he constantly uttered the words, "Ne frustra vixisse videar;" their double meaning cannot be rendered in English.]



MIGHTY sage lay at the point of death,
Tossing, delirious, in his feverish pain,
And, mid the gasping of his difficult
breath,

Muttered this sentence, ever and again—
"That I may seem not to have lived in vain!"

A mighty sage—to him the boundless stores
Of Nature lay disclosed: her subtlest ways
He traced observant. Heaven's empyreal doors
Rolled backwards at his will, and to his gaze
Showed all the wealth of stars wherewith her
regions blaze.

Princes and kings had vied in noble strife
To win the wizard. In a peaceful isle
One built him up a palace, where his life
Might pass in converse with the stars the while—
"The City of the Heavens"—"Oranienberg" the
pile.

The wise, the great, the noble, from afar
Made pilgrimage to see him, and commune
Upon the glory of each separate star—
The orbits of the planets, sun, and moon,
Sweeping the heavens with glass at midnight's noon.

And now beside him, at the supremest hour,
Stands, sad and mute, a fellow-sage, who came
To labour with him 'mongst the stars—whose power
Revealed the planets' laws—a glorious name
Three centuries embalm in deathless fame.

And as he sought to soothe the dying man,
Whose wild eye knew him not, he heard again
The same strange murmuring, ever as it ran,
Between the pauses of the sufferer's pain—
"That I might seem not to have lived in vain!"

What meant he by these words? 'Twere hard to
tell.

Perchance he uttered them in conscious pride
That in the hearts of men his name should dwell
A living power, spreading far and wide,
Long as the heavens should last, the earth abide.

Perchance, in trembling fear, as in the face
Of the tremendous future, all unknown,
His spirit hovered, and could find no place
Within its gloom to rest in hope upon,
That all he did in life had not been vainly done.

What! though he knew all mysteries, and read
Heaven as a scroll—what were to him the gain?
To take his science down unto the dead,
Giving the worms for food his wondrous brain!—
Ah! if 'twere so, then had he lived in vain.

Perchance he spoke in hope, as one who knew
Life's nobler use—to count all things as dross,
No knowledge excellent, no science true,
Save that which showed him Christ upon the
cross—

Teaching to die was gain, to live was loss.

And Kepler stood by Brahe till the spasm
Of anguish passed away, and that great brain
Ceased to throb wildly. Over the dark chasm
Twixt earth and heaven the spirit of the Dane
Passed! Who shall say that he had lived in vain?

Who?—Not the student, who, at dead of night,
Watches the welkin from his tower on high,
Telling by name each several orb of light—
Planet or star—that studs the luminous sky,
And scans the glories of the galaxy.

Who?—Not the seaman, when, from land afar,
His course upon the trackless deep he steers;
Fixing his eye upon some well-known star,
His heart is tranquil, for he knows no fears
While in the heavens that guiding light appears.

Oh! not the Christian—for he trusts that God,
Who formed that mighty intellect and brain,
Will raise him up, through Christ's atoning blood,
Amid his own redeemed saints to reign—
A servant good, who did not live in vain.

J. F. WALLER.

PEGGY OGLIVIE'S INHERITANCE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ROUND THE COURT," ETC.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EAST WIND.

THEY'RE moving off at last, mother!" said Captain Oglivie, from his sofa, looking up from the letter he had been reading.

"Who are moving off?" said the lady addressed, in a rather querulous tone.

"These old Oglivies," her son replied, tossing the letter into her lap. And silence followed while she read.

Captain Oglivie's regiment was quartered in Edinburgh Castle; and Captain Oglivie had apartments there, apartments which were dull enough, notwithstanding that the Castle commands one of the finest views in the kingdom. They simply looked upon a paved courtyard, in which the only movement that was ever to be seen was a company at drill, or a parcel of staring strangers making a pilgrimage to the rooms which Mary Queen of Scots had graced with her presence.

The captain might walk on the batteries, however, and they might well have atoned to him for the dull outlook of his chambers. There was the deep green valley at his feet; and beyond that, the fair and regular streets of the New Town, sloping to the green fields beyond; these in their turn running down to the silver firth, with its islands and its sails; and beyond the firth, if the mists were propitious, there were picturesque shores; and still further to the north and west, hints of cloud-capped mountains. To the east, among the hills that stand round about the city, there was the bold crest of the Salisbury Craggs, and the rugged head and smooth, green flanks of the lion couchant of Arthur's Seat.

But of these, and of all the other "beauties of Edinburgh," Captain Oglivie got tired before he had been many months in the place: as also of the beauties of another sort whom he met at the endless evening parties which he, as part of his duty, was expected to attend: as also of promenading up and down Prince's Street, the fashionable afternoon's lounge, and bowing perpetually to the hundred and one

acquaintances who already claimed that honour in the head-quarters of Scottish hospitality. His mother was with him in the town, and he was tired of her too. Not that he was a particularly undutiful son. He was fond of his mother, with the fondness people have for those who devote themselves exclusively to their, the said people's, interests. But she bored him nevertheless, insisting on accompanying him always and everywhere. She contrived to get herself asked out with her son continually, and Captain Oglivie knew that she was always on the look out for a suitable wife for him, and he lived in dread of her finding one.

His mother's taste and his own did not exactly correspond in that particular. The captain was fastidious in his taste. He could not make himself agreeable to a plain woman, and he could not tolerate a stupid one, and he scarcely dared so much as to look at or speak to a poor one, let her be ever so pretty or ever so witty, or even both at once. He was reduced to living on his pay, and a wife could not be maintained on expectations which had failed adequately to support himself. Besides, he did not want to get married. He did not think marriage, on the best of terms, compatible with making the most of himself.

Poor, with a taste for riches, idle, and yet having in him both the will and the power to exert himself with energy, given something which he considered worth the working for, Captain Oglivie was not a happy man. Moreover, he was a man deteriorating—a process which, happily, cannot go on without creating some discomfort. What was good in him was being overgrown by what was bad—by rank selfishness and self-indulgence.

His mother's apartments were in Prince's Street; he could see the windows from the ramparts above, and he lounged into them every day for luncheon. She was by no means luxuriously lodged—for the houses are comparatively mean—in "the finest street in Europe;" neither was she a luxurious liver. In truth, she had barely enough to live upon.

She was sitting bolt upright in her chair (the backs of the last generation must have been stronger than

those of the present), after a frugal meal, at which she drank water, while her son drank wine. He lay stretched at full length on the sofa, when the servant entered with a letter brought by the midday post. It was for him, and, with his mother's eyes upon him, he took it lazily, and proceeded to break the seal. First, however, he looked at the post-mark, having noted the mourning edge, and when he had read it, he manifested a little more interest, by bringing his feet to the floor.

"What is it?" asked his mother, eagerly.

But he took his time to answer, and then he vouchsafed the exclamation and explanation recorded above.

And there was silence in the room until she had read the letter, in which Margery Oglivie announced her sister's death. She had not written immediately—that is, not till after the funeral, as she did not expect Captain Oglivie to come so far to attend it, at such a season.

"What a mercy!" exclaimed his mother, when she had finished her perusal.

"Well, I can't say I see any particular good in it," rejoined the son. "There's the other old lady, a great deal tougher than the one that's gone; but, for all that, the present Sir Alexander may live longest."

"I did not mean that the death was a mercy, Horace," said his mother, reproachfully; "but it is a mercy for a man who has suffered so long as Gilbert Oglivie to be taken away."

"He's not dead!"

"No; but don't you see what she says at the end of her letter? he's not expected to last much longer."

"I didn't notice that," said Captain Oglivie, taking back the letter out of his mother's hands. "It is strange that she should mention him," he muttered, as he re-perused the concluding portion, which, to say truth, he had skipped, as containing only "suitable reflections." "I shouldn't wonder if they trumped up a reconciliation at the last. It would be all up with me in that case."

"How?" said his mother, sharply.

"I don't think Mistress Margery is specially fond of me, that's all. But I don't see that it matters much: she is like enough to see me out. As for Gilbert Oglivie, it seems to me, since he has lived so long, there's nothing to hinder him from living for ever. I wish," he added, bitterly—"I wish I had learned to work like a man, instead of hanging on, waiting for others to die. But there isn't a chance in this wretched profession!"

"You're going to the ball to-night?" said his mother.

"I suppose I must," he answered, sulkily; "are you?"

It was rather an abrupt turn which the old lady had given to the conversation; but it followed quite naturally the association of ideas in her mind, the connecting link being the future fortune of her son. She replied in the affirmative. "Do you think you could settle it to-night?" she went on, after a pause.

"Oh, bother!"

The settlement thus politely shelved, was that of no less important a matter than the securing of the hand of a very plain young lady, who had been recently left an orphan, and was entirely her own mistress, to whom, in a fit of desperation, the captain had contemplated sacrificing himself.

"Well, there's Miss Jessie Barclay," persisted his mother; "she's pretty enough, and I'm sure she's only waiting to be asked."

"Stupid as an owl!" he answered. "I took her down to supper the other night, but I could get nothing out of her but 'yes' or 'no.' She could not take up the simplest subject—dropped them all—till I could think of nothing more to say. I could only feed her, and it wasn't an easy task, mother, I assure you: trifle, and tartlets, and creams, disappeared like magic. She would eat up her fortune in the course of a year, I'm certain."

"How very ill-natured you are, Horace," cried his mother. "She's a sweet young lady."

"Very," he answered, wickedly, and added, "my dear mamma, your society is infinitely preferable to hers;" a statement which restored the old lady to good humour and pertinacity at once.

"Then there's the father, you know," he replied, after listening to a statement of the advantages of marriage in general and of this marriage in particular; "he is sure to insist on settlements. I don't want to be thrown over again, as I was by that old soapboiler only three months ago. It's most likely this Mr. Barclay would do just the same—ask me how I meant to provide for my wife, and tell me to table an equal sum in case of my death. It's always the way with these traders; they must make a bargain about everything; and they never think of dying. There! I hate the whole thing," he exclaimed, his pale face flushing with anger, mostly at circumstances, but partly also at himself for being the slave of these, and he flung himself back on the sofa in no very amiable frame of mind.

Being in an uncomfortable mood, his thoughts reverted to Peggy Oglivie. His thoughts did not turn to her very often,—indeed, only when he could not help himself. He was vexed with himself about her, and that did not make the thought of her particularly pleasant to him. He wished that he had denied himself the gratification of making love to her, and of finding out if she would return it. But he was not in the habit of denying himself any gratification. "She was both pretty and clever," he thought; "no, not clever: she might be quite dull at an evening party perhaps; but refreshing, somehow." He had not felt so like himself—his best self—with any woman since. "Poor little thing! I hope she has forgotten all about me by this time," was his reflection with regard to her. Then he said, aloud, "I wish Miss Margery had asked me to go down, I think I should have gone; indeed, I shouldn't much mind going yet."

"The wind is in the east, my dear Horace," said his mother; "and you know you cannot bear the east wind."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DEATH AND CHANGE.

DURING the winter, Delaube had not been left so entirely to itself as formerly. Peggy's name and fame were being spread abroad by her friend the doctor, and one or two ladies of the neighbourhood had ventured to call upon her, half in kindness, half in curiosity. Their verdict was strictly favourable, for they had found her "nothing particular,"—who ever does find anybody anything in particular in the course of a morning call? And so their kindness had increased as their curiosity diminished. Doctor and Mrs. Grant had come whenever open weather permitted them, bringing news of Archie and Sandie at their studies. And Mr. Keith had also come, accompanied by his wife, a quick-eyed, merry little woman, who could almost have persuaded any one that there was no such thing as care and sorrow in the world.

It was not, therefore, an unprecedented occurrence that of Peggy being summoned from her grandfather's side to receive a visitor. But she left him, and went into the long-disused drawing-room, which Jean had lately insisted on furnishing up, expecting to see one or other of the above-mentioned ladies. It appeared to be a stranger, however, who stood with her back toward the door, looking out of the window. She faced suddenly round as Peggy entered, saying, abruptly, "You won't know me, I dare say."

"Now I know you," answered Peggy, at once recognising the voice, though she had failed to recognise the face—which was in shadow—or the figure, draped in deep mourning.

The sensitive blood was rising in Peggy's cheeks. She was at a loss how to receive her visitor, who still remained standing, and whose embarrassment was so visibly painful. To put an end to it was her immediate impulse. She therefore drew near and offered her hand, and Margery Oglvie found herself seated, and speaking as freely as it was her nature to speak, before she knew how it had come about. After the exchange of a few sentences, "How is he?" she jerked out, uneasily.

"My grandfather is rather better to day," Peggy answered.

"I have come to see him," said Margery, in the same uneasy tone.

"I must ask him whether he is able first. It might agitate him to see you without warning. Shall I go to him now and tell him you are here?"

Margery assented, and Peggy, more than half afraid of the consequences, went to prepare her grandfather for the visit.

It was certainly a great change that had come upon Gilbert Oglvie. He no longer desired to hide himself, like a wounded beast, from the sight of his kind, and though he trembled visibly at Peggy's communication, he only said, "I am glad she has come; tell her I am glad she has come. I had thoughts of sending for her, for your sake, little one."

"For my sake, grandfather!" but the questioning

"why," was interrupted by the eagerness with which the dying man repeated, "Send her to me as quickly as you can, child."

Peggy returned with her message, and speedily ushered Margery Oglvie into her grandfather's presence. She seemed to divine that the two should be left alone, for she prepared to leave the room at once, saying, "I will come to you when you ring for me, grandfather."

"Ay, that will be the best," he answered; and as she left the room she saw a thin hand held out to Margery Oglvie from the bed.

A long time elapsed, so long a time that Peggy became quite uneasy, and still the interview had not come to a close. More than once she thought of interrupting it, lest it should prove hurtful to her patient. But at length the visitor came out, looking not paler—she could not well look paler than she was—but, more gentle and subdued, with that abstracted, concentrated look which long-continued or strong emotion gives.

"He does not want you just yet," she said, softening her harsh tones till her voice sounded strangely humble. "I have given him some wine. He will ring for you in a little;" and with a promise to come again, she took her leave.

An hour after, Peggy went into her grandfather's room, and found him asleep, and came away again softly.

And again she sat patiently waiting, and working also, till the light waxed dimmer and dimmer, and she could no longer see to draw the delicate pattern she was elaborating. The day was closing, and Jean came in to say it was time for tea.

Then she thought it would be best to waken the sleeper, and she went in to him once more. She called to him softly, but he did not stir. Then she went and drew aside the heavy curtain, and let in the last light of day, and, looking in his face, he was dead! And a great cry rang through the quiet house.

Gilbert Oglvie lay dead at last; and, instead of looking like a man who has suffered sore defeat, he looked like a king reposing in his triumph. And he had triumphed. On the battle-ground of his soul he had routed and put to flight the demons of wrath and pride, and won the sum of all victory—peace.

It was after the funeral, and Peggy was left alone with Margery Oglvie.

"What will you do now?" said the latter, in her sudden way.

"I will stay here," was the answer, very gently spoken.

"You will come home with me," was the somewhat peremptory rejoinder.

"I cannot."

"But it is not fit that one so young as you should live alone," said the older woman.

"I am not afraid of being alone."

"You will be the wonder of the whole countryside," said Margery.

Peggy, in her sorrow, felt utterly indifferent to their wonder. The argument did not move her. She only repeated, "I cannot come."

"Think better of it," said the harsh-seeming woman, with tears in her eyes. "I'm a poor lonely creature, and I would do what I could to make you happy. If you knew what it was to wish you had been kinder, when those you might have been kind to will never need it more, you would come. My life has been very hard. It's harder now than I'm able to bear almost," and she fairly gave way, and wept.

She had fallen upon the right sort of argument at last, for Peggy softened at once at the sight of her suffering, and hastened to offer, as a sort of a compromise, to go and stay with her for a time at least.

And thus it was settled. It was the first spring morning of the year, counting, not by the calendar, but by the bursting of buds, the singing of birds, and the warmth of sunshine, when Peggy set out on her visit.

She was conscious of a chill falling upon body and spirit as she was driven into the neglected domain of the Forest House, through the open gateway of the principal entrance. The last year's leaves muffled the sound of the wheels, so thickly were they strewn upon the drive. The sunshine seemed to be less warm within the enclosure, the very birds seemed to sing less gaily. She was glad that the gate stood open behind her; it seemed like a way of escape. Had it closed, she would have felt as if a prison had received and shut her in.

There was a chill also in the welcome which was awarded to her, not on the threshold, but within the room which she remembered so well. Margery Oglivie had relapsed into her customary rigidity, and stood, as stiffly as one of her high-backed, uncomfortable chairs, holding out her hand with scanty greeting.

Peggy forgot, or rather she did not know, how impossible it is to throw off the habit of a lifetime. And to her, to whom expression was so easy and so natural, who could not help expressing herself as it were, the constraint of one in whom the power was wanting was difficult to understand. Margery Oglivie seemed cold and constrained, while in reality she was suffering from excess of emotion.

They spent a painful morning, these two women, with nothing in common but subjects that it was better to avoid, or at least that they thought had better be avoided. They went over the house, in which there was nothing to see, and they went over the grounds, from which there was nothing to be seen, the place being built almost in a hollow. They were returning to the house, when, at the end of the walk along which they were advancing, they saw two men coming toward them. One was the old gardener, and the other was poor witless Alexander Oglivie.

"You won't be frightened at my brother," said Margery, with an appealing look which softened her

rigid features. "I wished him to keep out of the way for a day or two, but he is not always easy to manage. He may cry out, till he gets accustomed to you."

With a conscious shrinking Peggy replied that it was better to let him get accustomed to her at once; and so she advanced up the walk, feeling that she would gladly have taken hold of her companion's arm, but fearing that such a sign of timidity would give her pain.

But, instead of behaving wildly, as he sometimes would, Alexander Oglivie greeted Peggy with a reassuring smile. It was really only when he was frightened that he cried out, or when any one exhibited signs of fear, and she had put forth all her energies to repress any such signs. She had even ventured on giving him her hand, and he smoothed it between his own long, thin fingers as one smooths the coat of a pet animal. They were to be friends, it was evident, for Peggy's fear had given place to pity, and he seemed to accept her presence with signs that betokened pleasure. And they were friends from that hour.

After a day or two he began to seek her, and to follow her about, and to exhibit for her a kind of dumb animal affection, which was very touching. Margery saw it, and was glad, and yet there mingled with her gladness a feeling that was very like jealousy. He had been worse to manage since Janet's death: perhaps it was that there had been two to bear the burden while she lived; but Margery, with all her devotion, had never been able to exert over him the soothing influence which her sister had exercised; and here was a stranger who already had more of that influence than she.

Peggy had taken out her drawing one afternoon, when the poor fellow came to the window, and demanded admittance in a noisy fashion. Under the impression that he might disturb her at her task, Margery had risen, and was endeavouring by signs to send him away. But he would not be sent.

"Please don't," said Peggy, divining the motive; "let him come and sit beside me: he will not disturb me in the least."

"He will be certain to disturb you," replied his sister. "He will take away some of your papers. We cannot keep a bit of written paper for him."

"Oh, never mind," Peggy answered; "let him come."

And he came, and manifested an immediate desire to take possession of her whole stock. But she restrained him. She always spoke to him as if he could hear and understand. And while he watched her movements, he did somehow seem to understand. Then she took her pencil, and made a rapid sketch for him, a rude representation of a tree and a cow. After that he was content to sit beside her while she drew, till it became quite an occupation for her to amuse him in this way.

The painfulness and restraint were wearing off between Margery and her guest, greatly helped by

the good understanding established between the latter and poor Sir Alexander; but the awful monotony began to make itself felt; Margery felt it for another, though she had never felt it for herself, and strove in some measure to break it up. She went beyond the grounds in their daily walk; she got the chaise and drove to Delaube, that Peggy might see how Jean got on in her absence. Still, she was conscious how very dull the life must be to a mere girl, and she could think of nothing to enliven it. When they sat together, there were great blanks in their talk,

"like the spaces between these awful chairs," Peggy thought. And then the prison-feeling would come over her, and she would look sad, and pale, till the rigid woman who sat opposite regarded her with keen, cold eyes, that ought to have been soft with pity if they had only been lighted from within.

At last she had thought of something. Sitting together one evening, she said, suddenly, "I have written to Captain Oglivie, a relation of ours, asking him to come and stay for a week or two while you are here!"
(*To be continued.*)

MRS. O'HALLORAN'S HOSPITALITY.



ABOUT twelve years ago I paid a visit to London, and during my stay there took charge of a Sunday class. The school was held in a long, dingy room, over stabling; and the high, small windows admitted but a scanty portion of light or air. The place was situate in the heart of a squalid, crowded neighbourhood, and the children were of a sadly neglected type. My heart ached as I glanced at the pale, sharp faces which gathered round me.

"Are all this class here?" I inquired of the eldest girl.

"No, teacher, there's little Mike O'Halloran; and sure, here he comes."

The opening door admitted a lad about eight years old—a striking contrast to every other child in the room. His hair was auburn, his cheeks were red, his eyes were blue, he had on a green tie, in short, he gave one the idea of something particularly fresh and smart. He came forward smiling: the other children made way, and Mike gave me a bashful obeisance as he took his seat at the top of the class.

When school was over, I proceeded to take down the names and addresses of my scholars. It was not a very easy task. Many seemed almost unconscious of the possession of a surname; and in lieu of "numbers," I was instructed "to go down the court, and ring the top bell three times at the rag-shop." Puzzled and anxious, I waded through the duty, until one by one my poor pupils left, and only little Mike O'Halloran remained.

"I know your name," I said, smiling, as he stood before me, and pulled his radiant forelock. "And where do you live?"

"At No. 3, Elm Court," he answered, promptly; "push open the front door, and walk straight up till you see a door with 'O'Halloran' on it—that's ours: and, please, mother says, when may she expect you to see us?"

I looked up astonished. He seemed to think I needed an explanation, and went on, "We knowed there was to be a new teacher, miss, and mother telled me to say that, with her reverence and respect."

"I shall try to come in the course of the week, Mike," I answered, getting greatly interested in the boy.

"But, please, miss," and he spoke in a confidential

tone, "won't you make me able to go home and tell mother when you'll come, or haply she'll be out, and she's mighty sorry to miss a visitor, cause we has so few!"

"Then I will come to-morrow," I promised; "but what is that at the door?" for Mike and I were left alone in the dingy room, and there was a mighty scratching outside.

"It's only Smut—that's Mr. Smith's, the butcher's dog. He always comes to fetch me; good afternoon, miss;" and the little fellow hurried off, and I heard him receive a very noisy canine greeting.

Now, during this conversation, I had time to observe the boy, and saw that, despite his bright appearance, he was very poorly clad. The green tie was only a bit of worsted braid, and his clean collar was quite embroidered with darns. I concluded there must be active hands and a brave heart in little Mike's home, and I was quite glad when Monday evening came.

Elm Court was a dirty noisy place, with great old houses which had once seen better days, and were adorned with quaint wood carvings, whose shattered remnants still remained, only serving to harbour dirt. "Number 3" was no better than the others. The front door stood open, and I groped up the wide, dark staircase, till the name "O'Halloran" stared in my face. Now this was not on a plate, nor yet painted on the door, nor yet written on a card; the name was composed of single letters, of various colours, apparently cut from play-bills or placards, and pasted on a piece of thin wood, nailed over the door. "These are clever people," I thought, as I knocked.

Mike let me in. The room was at the top of the house, a low, wide chamber, with sloping, whitewashed walls. There were two beds on the floor, each covered with gaudy patchwork quilts. Close to the fireplace, was a small deal table with a white cloth over it, and some stools and chairs about it. Mrs. O'Halloran came forward from this corner.

"I'm right proud to see you, miss," she said, "and the tay will be ready in a minute, if you'll do us the favour of taking a cup."

I could not refuse, for Mike's smiling face told that he regarded the affair as a grand entertainment; so I took off my bonnet and sat down.

"There's only us three," said Mrs. O'Halloran, as she set out two cups and a mug. I'm a widow, miss, dear, or the place would be better worth coming to."

"But Smut's coming," put in Mike.

"Well, go and fetch him," said his mother. "Mr. Smith lets us have Smut, whenever we like, miss; and that's a great favour, for he's a famous play-fellow for the boy, and we couldn't afford a dog for ourselves."

"Mike will soon be a great help to you, I remarked."

"Mike's a help now, miss," she answered, "for he earns a little money, let alone keeping the place clean, and giving me heart to work. Sure, miss, I've heard people pity widows for having children to maintain; but says I, God help the widows that has none! It's mighty hard to be work, work, working, with no one to work for. And then the ones that has the care and 'sponsibility can't well keep things nice; they begins to think it'll do to eat dinner in the street, and it'll do to lay down on the bed without making it; and they loses all comfort in life, and perhaps takes to the public."

We were a very merry party, Mrs. O'Halloran and I, Mike and Smut, who held up his black nose with an expression that said plainly, "The smallest contributions thankfully received." Gradually, the mother and I fell into graver conversation.

"I can't read myself," she said, "and I always look forward to Sunday evening, when Mike tells me what he's heard in the school. He reads the Bible to me now—it's very little I knew about it before he could; but yet I knew just enough to get along with. My poor man and me both knew the Lord had died for us, and though we'd neither of us any learning, we'd been taught one or two texts that stuck to us all along, telling us that we must all love one another, as Jesus had loved us, and not be over-careful, but to always give thanks. And when poor Michael was a-dying—he was hurt by a fall, miss; but, thank God, they brought him home, and not to the hospital—he just put his arm round Mike and me, and said, 'Mary, I'm certain sure there's a text where God says, Leave the fatherless children and widows to me, and I will provide,—only it says it in beautiful words than I can remember. And Mary,' he says, 'you hold fast to that, and mind there's some one taking better care of you than poor Michael could.' And the Lord has provided," said Mrs. O'Halloran, with streaming eyes. "Mike and I have always been well and hearty, and if the meal has been sometimes scanty, better the good appetite without food, than food without appetite. Some folks said, 'Get the boy into some school, and go to service;' but I answered, 'Not I! leave the charity for orphans; Mike isn't an orphan while he's got his mother.' And now, miss, we're getting on better every day. I can get enough to keep us, and Mike manages to pay his own schooling and get his bits of clothes—the time'll come when he'll have better; and we can always pick up pleasures without

paying for 'em. We're seldom without a flower in the room, Mike finds 'em among the rubbish in Farrington Market—a little faded, maybe, but fresh water sets 'em up, and their scent comes over me, with the memory of the times when Michael and I were courtin' in the bonny lanes of Bargo! Oh, the Lord has given us many blessings!"

"And none greater than your cheerful spirit," I said.

"That's just the young gentleman's words," interrupted Mike, pausing in his gambols with Smut.

"Who is the young gentleman?" I inquired.

Mrs. O'Halloran looked confused. "Just a poor boy I gave a night's lodging to, last week," she said.

"It was a mortal cold night, and he was lyin' on the doorstep," explained Mike; "and mother took him down a basin of porridge, and arterwards she let him sleep up here."

"I'm feared he was an impostor," said Mrs. O'Halloran, shaking her head, "for in the morning, instead of owing he was a honest lad, tramping the country for work, he said as he was a gentleman's son, who had run away from home, thinking he would like to go to sea. So I advised him in that case to make his way back, and I gave him a copper or two, but I was very stiff to him after that story, for I didn't believe it. But a little kindness couldn't hurt him, whatever he was."

Just then came a knock at the door. Mike went to open it, and exclaimed, joyfully, "Mother, it's the young gentleman himself! and some one else beside."

Then entered a tall, well-dressed youth, whom Mrs. O'Halloran evidently could hardly recognise, followed by a stout, farmer-like man, who shook the widow's hand with bluff heartiness.

"Where would yonder young fellow have been, but for your kindness, mistress?" he said. "I've made inquiries about you since, and find you're a well-spoken woman; and I like you none the less for not being over eager to believe that boy's romantic story. I think he'll take your advice for the future, and stop at home. But suppose you come and live in my lodge, and then you'll be able to keep the gates shut, if he wants to run away."

"Oh, miss, dear!" sobbed Mrs. O'Halloran, when her visitors were gone, after making arrangements to expect her and Mike (and Smut too, if Mr. Smith would part with him) at the lodge in the course of the week—"oh, miss, dear, isn't it altogether too wonderful?"

"Not too wonderful, Mrs. O'Halloran," I whispered; "Mike will show you a text which says, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.'"

Then I bade them both good-bye. Oh, their room was very humble, and yet it pained me to leave it for my own lonely lodging. But I comforted myself by looking in at Mr. Smith's, the butcher's, and completing Mike's delight by securing the pleasure of Smut's society in his pleasant country home.

But how I missed the boy's bright face next Sunday!

I. F.